

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1. A system management apparatus for retrieving and displaying SMBIOS data relating to the configuration and components of a computing system to a user via a display terminal comprising:

5 a database of SMBIOS structures stored on a computer-readable medium containing data related to the configuration of the computing system and components of the computing system;

 a utility stored on a computer-readable medium, which in response to commands from a user, retrieves data from said database and displays the data on the display
10 terminal; and

 a template file stored on a computer-readable medium separate from said utility, containing information for interpreting and displaying the SMBIOS data retrieved by said utility from said database, wherein said template file eliminates the requirement that the information for interpreting and displaying the data stored in said database be contained
15 in the utility.

2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said template file includes at least two types of keys for interpreting the information stored in said template file.

3. An apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said template file includes data descriptor keys that define the information stored in said template file.

20 4. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said template file includes data descriptor keys that indicate the type of data retrieved from the database and a format in which it should be displayed.

5. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said template file includes individual data descriptor keys for defining raw data and data strings.

25 6. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said template file includes a data descriptor key for defining a bit field having individual bits representing information based on whether the bit is a one or a zero.

7. An apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the bit field has N bits where less than N bits of the bit field are defined, and wherein said template file further includes a data descriptor key indicating to said utility the last defined bit position in the bit field such that said template file does not include and said utility does not search for undefined bits of the bit field in the template file.

8. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said template file includes a data descriptor key for defining an enumerated data value, wherein the numerical value of the data represents a defined setting in the computing system and components.

9. An apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein the enumerated data has N possible values, and wherein said template file further includes a data descriptor key indicating to said utility a last defined data value such that said template file does not include and said utility does not search for undefined values in the template file.

10. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said template file includes a data descriptor key for defining multiple groups of bits within a bit field representing a setting of the computing system and components.

11. An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein a group of bits in the bit field has N bits and can define 2^N values, where less than 2^N values are defined, and wherein said template file further includes a data descriptor key indicating to said utility a last defined value for each group of bits such that said template file does not include and said utility does not search for undefined bit field group values.

12. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said template file includes a data descriptor key for defining a data value representing a count indicating a number of data strings.

13. An apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said template file includes information in the form of structure definitions used to interpret and display the data stored in said database.

14. An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein said template file includes process control keys used to interpret the structure definitions stored in said template file.

15. An apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein said template file includes a process control key indicating a beginning of a SMBIOS structure definition.

5 16. An apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein said template file includes a process control key indicating the end of the template file.

17. An apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein said template file includes a process control key indicating to said utility the number of times a group of fields in a structure definition is repeated and the size of the repeated area in bytes.

10 18. An apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein said template file includes process control keys indicating a beginning and ending of a group of repeated fields in a structure definition.

15 19. An apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising a second template file containing structure definitions for data stored in said database by an original equipment manufacturer.

20 20. A method for creating a template file for use in interpreting and displaying SMBIOS data relating to the configuration and components of a computing system to a user via a display terminal comprising:

 providing a database of SMBIOS structures stored on a computer-readable medium containing data related to the configuration of the computing system and components of the computing system;

 providing a utility stored on a computer-readable medium, which in response to commands from a user, retrieves data from the database and displays the data on the display terminal; and

25 creating a template file stored on a computer-readable medium separate from the utility, containing information for interpreting and displaying the data retrieved by the utility from the database, wherein the template file eliminates the requirement that the